

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AU

SUBJECT: LOWER AUSTRIAN PROVINCIAL ELECTION RESULTS

DEPARTMENT PASS TO SALZBURG TO AMBASSADOR HUMES

REF: A-255

SUMMARY:

AS ANTICIPATED IN REFAIR JUNE 9, PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS IN LOWER AUSTRIA PRODUCED SLIGHT GAIN FOR GOVERNING PEOPLE'S PARTY (OEV) AT EXPENSE OF SOCIALISTS (SPOE). TWO OTHER CONTENDING PARTIES WERE UNABLE TO ACHIEVE REPRESENTATION. PEOPLE'S PARTY'S MODEST VICTORY SHOULD HAVE FAVORABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT FOR ITS CANDIDATE, LUGGAR, IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS TWO WEEKS HENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN YESTERDAY'S LOWER AUSTRIAN ELECTIONS, THE OEVP WHICH HAD GOVERNED THIS PROVINCE SINCE END OF WORLD WAR II GAINED ONE SEAT WHICH IT HAD LOST TO SPOE FIVE YEARS AGO. NEW PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE WILL HAVE THIRTY-ONE OEVP REPRESENTATIVES AND TWENTY-FIVE SOCIALISTS. NEITHER THE RIGHT WING FREEDOM PARTY NOR THE COMMUNISTS GAINED REPRESENTATION. OF 864,352 VOTES CAST OEVP RECEIVED

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52.3 PER CENT (50.4 PER CENT IN 1969); SPOE - 43.7 PER

CENT (44.6); FREEDOM PARTY - 3 PER CENT(3.2);
COMMUNISTS - 1 PER CENT(0.7).

2. NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP PLACED OUTCOME INTO
BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT FROM ITS VANTAGE POINT. THUS
OEVF CHAIRMAN, SCHLEINZER, CHARACTERIZED OUTCOME AS
GREAT VICTORY OF (LOWER AUSTRIAN GOVERNOR) MAURER OVER
CHANCELLOR KREISKY WHILE LATTER STATED LOSS OF LESS
THAN 1 PER CENT OF VOTES IS QUITE INSIGNIFICANT.
TRUTH OF MATTER LIES SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN. OEVP
WHICH HAD MOVED UP ELECTIONS IN HOPES OF BENEFITING
FROM EARLIER LOCAL VICTORIES AND CONTINUING HIGH RATE
OF INFLATION FOR WHICH IT HOLDS SPOE NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE, SIMPLY REGAINED STRENGTH IT
HAD CONSISTENTLY ENJOYED SINCE 1959, BUT HOPED FOR
ONE OF MORE ADDITIONAL SEATS. SOCIALISTS WOULD HAVE
CONSIDERED HOLDING ONE SEAT GAINED FIVE YEARS AGO AS
CLEAR VICTORY BUT WERE UNABLE TO COMPETE EFFECTIVELY
AGAINST HIGHLY POPULAR OEVP GOVERNOR, HIS DISCIPLINED,
WELL-ENDOWED PARTY ORGANIZATION AND WIDE-SPREAD DIS-
SATISFACTION WITH RISING INFLATION.

3. ALTHOUGH DIRECT EFFECT OF THIS ELECTION CANNOT BE
GLEANED FOR JUNE 23 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, THE PSYCHOL-
OGICAL IMPACT OF THIS THIRD PROVINCIAL OEVP VICTORY
(OUT OF FOUR HELD IN LAST YEAR) IS BOUND TO IMPROVE THE
CHANCES OF OEVP CANDIDATE LUGGER WHO IS STILL CONSIDERED
LAGGING BEHIND SOCIALIST-BACKED CANDIDATE KIRCHACHLAEGER. HUMES

NOTE BY OC/T: VIENNA 5130 NOT PASSED SALZBURG.

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